

soldiers, the sailors, the men and women of the Air Force, and, of course, my fellow Marines. More of the world is free today than ever before, thanks in no small part to their valor and sacrifice half a century ago.

The twentieth century began with much of the globe dominated by militaristic empires. In the First World War, our armed forces were the lever that pried these colonial empires apart.

In their ruin, the hideous forces of totalitarianism grew to great power, threatening to engulf us all. In the dark hour, American GIs of every color, of every national origin and creed, left the safety of their homes and began the struggle of the century. In World War II, American forces joined with freedom-loving people from Europe, Africa and Asia to defeat the Axis—that misspent laboratory for human cruelty.

The cost was extraordinarily high. Over one and one-half million minority Americans gave their lives to this cause. Some 1.2 million were African Americans, for whom racial slavery was no hypothetical concept. Over 300,000 were Hispanic Americans and another 50,000 were Asian Americans, willing to look past the discrimination they endured toward a better day that only democracy could bring. More than 20,000 Native Americans died for this country in World War II, along with more than 5,000 Native Hawaiians and over 3,000 Native Alaskans.

This week the House echoed the words of General Colin Powell, former Chairman of the Joints Chief of Staff, who wrote last year that among those who best exemplified courage, selflessness, exuberance, superhuman ability, and amazing grace during the past 200 years was the American GI.

“... In this century,” General Powell said, “hundreds of thousands of GIs died to bring to the beginning of the 21st century the victory of democracy as the ascendant political system of the face of the earth. The GIs were willing to travel far away and give their lives, if necessary, to secure the rights and freedoms of others. Only a nation such as ours, based on a firm moral foundation, could make such a request of its citizens. And the GIs wanted nothing more than to get the job done and then return home safely. All they asked for in repayment from those they freed was the opportunity to help them become part of the world of democracy . . . . Near the top of any listing of the most important people of the 20th century must stand, in singular honor, the American GI.”

The American GI who served during World War II came in many colors and represented many cultures. Those of us who grew up in my generation, and went on to serve in another dark time, have taken courage in the stories of the Tuskegee Airmen, the Nisei soldiers in Italy, the Navajo code-talkers in the Pacific, the Hispanic fighters who head the roll of the Medal of Honor and others. The diversity of these heroic men and women, and their determination to show what they could do, was a source of their strength. It still is today.

In light of the accomplishments of the Armed Forces of the United States during World War II both of defeating the forces of tyranny and dictatorship and in embodying a sense of honor, decency, and respect for mankind, I join in saluting our minority American GIs.

But no tribute to the courage and dedication of America's minority veterans should stop with 1945. Having fought for their country, these diverse and courageous men and women could no longer be contained by the brutal rules they had known as children. They were also the footsoldiers and leaders of the civil rights movements that followed World War II. They went home and took on careers and bought homes, set up businesses, entered the professions and all the walks of life that had been barely imaginable for them before the war. They had defended democracy as servicemembers and wanted nothing less than full participation in the democratic institutions they had preserved.

I am proud to honor our nation's brave minority veterans. I salute them and thank them for a job well done.

## ENERGY POLICY AND CONSERVATION REAUTHORIZATION

SPEECH OF

**HON. ROSA L. DeLAURO**

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, April 11, 2000*

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, today the House of Representatives passed an important reauthorization bill, the Energy Policy and Conservation Act. This bill does a number of important things including reauthorizing the Strategic Petroleum Reserve, but it does one thing in particular that is very important to Connecticut: it sets up a home heating oil reserve for the Northeast based on legislation Congressman BERNIE SANDERS introduced and I cosponsored.

The bill calls on the federal government to create a 2 million barrel home heating oil reserve which could be released by the President when oil prices rise rapidly, when there is a disruption in supply or when there is a regional crisis like the cold snap Connecticut and other Northeastern states faced last winter. This will help our region deal with uncertainties in the market and will stabilize oil prices in the future.

As we all remember this past winter, the average price of home heating oil increased by almost 50 percent in less than one month, and at its peak, the price of oil was double what it has been the previous year. Many of my constituents were in situations where they could not afford to fill their tanks to heat their homes. Some were choosing between eating their meals or heating their homes. We cannot allow that to happen in the future.

The creation of this home heating oil reserve will prevent these disruptions and will provide more stability for my constituents who were forced to pay outrageously high prices to heat their homes, or worse, to make difficult choices between paying bills for food, clothes, doctor visits and heating their homes. It would give the Northeast a tool in combating the type of crisis we faced this winter, when low temperatures and high oil prices forced many people into a situation where they were unable to keep their homes warm for their families. It is imperative that the House and Senate retain this provision when they meet to develop a

conference report on the Energy Policy and Conservation Act.

## ENERGY POLICY AND CONSERVATION ACT REAUTHORIZATION

SPEECH OF

**HON. J.C. WATTS, JR.**

OF OKLAHOMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, April 11, 2000*

Mr. WATTS of Oklahoma. Mr. Speaker, I am in strong support of H.R. 2884, the Strategic Petroleum Reserve Reauthorization. This important legislation takes the necessary steps to address the current policy of reliance on foreign oil which is threatening our national security.

I would like to share with you an important quote. It's a quote from President Clinton. He said, and I quote directly:

“I am today concurring with the Commerce Department's finding that the nation's growing reliance on imports of crude oil and refined petroleum products threaten the nation's security because they increase U.S. vulnerability to oil supply interruptions.”

That statement was made by the President in 1994 when imported oil was less than 51% of American consumption. Here we are today, 6 years later, and not only have we not reduced that demand for foreign oil, not only have we not stabilized that demand, we have actually increased that demand to over 56% of our consumption.

Dependence on foreign oil is an ever-growing threat to America's security. President Clinton stated that fact six years ago, but the facts also show the Clinton-Gore Administration has been AWOL when it comes to encouraging the development of the domestic energy supply that would decrease our reliance on foreign product.

The legislation before us is a step in the right direction toward the development of our domestic energy supply. This provision gives the Energy Secretary discretionary authority to purchase oil from domestic sources as opposed to the current practice of only buying foreign oil. H.R. 2884 authorizes, at the discretion of the Energy Secretary, the purchase of oil from these marginal “stripper” wells whenever the price of oil dips below \$15 dollars per barrel. This is vital to the improvement of our energy policy in the United States today. This legislation also takes a major step in improving the economic situation for the small, independent producers in America, while, at the same time, strengthening our national security.

There are more than 6,000 independent producers nationwide, many working out of their homes with few employees. Yet they drill 85% of domestic oil and natural gas wells in America, contributing close to half of our nation's domestic oil and gas output.

Mr. Speaker, we must develop a national energy policy that protects our security interests while, at the same time, improving the production economy in America. The passage of H.R. 2884 will be an important step in that direction. I urge my colleagues in the House to join me in casting their vote in favor of this very important legislation.